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begins On Page 3



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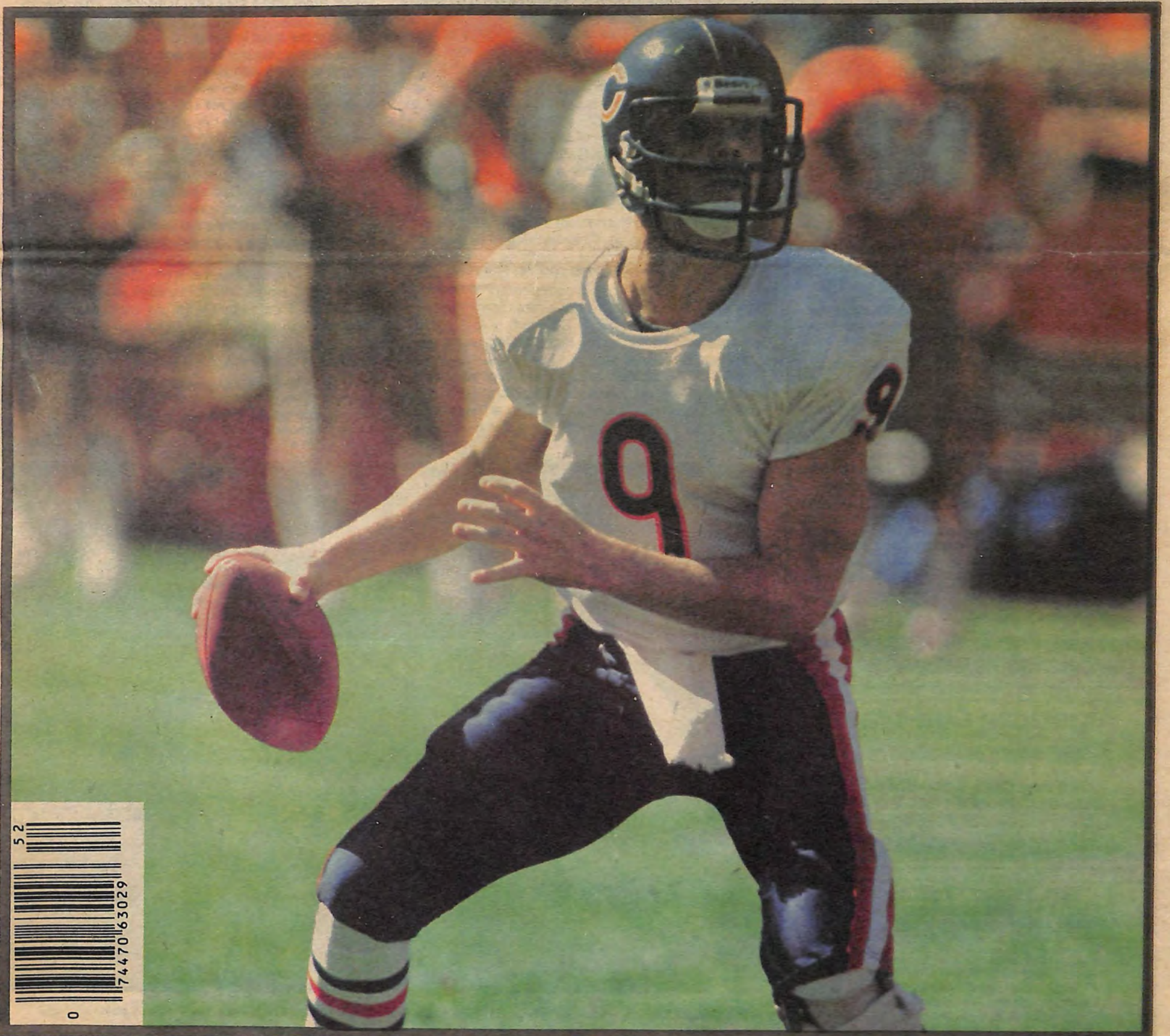
BEAR REPORT

A NEWSPAPER DEVOTED EXCLUSIVELY TO THE CHICAGO BEARS AND THE NFL.

Vol. 10, No. 22 December 26, 1985

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A Newspaper Devoted Exclusively
To The Chicago Bears and The NFL

Vol. 10, No. 22 December 26, 1985

On The Cover...

QUARTERBACK Jim McMahon is healthy and ready for his first playoff game as a pro. (Bear Report photo by Jonathan Daniel)



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Commentary



By
Doug
Buffone



Bears Ready For Playoffs

Maybe the Bears did make a few mistakes in their 37-17 victory over the Lions last Sunday at the Pontiac Silverdome, but it was still an impressive win nevertheless.

Just ask the Dolphins, Cowboys, 49ers and Jets how it feels to play in the Silverdome. The Lions have been deadly there all season long. They are like a different team when they play at home. Any visiting club should be thankful it gets out of that place with a win.

WHILE THE BOOK says the Bears can not afford mistakes in the playoffs, I'm beginning to wonder. They turned the ball over four times last Sunday yet still found a way to score 37 points. Sometimes all it takes is a few big plays and a game can totally turn around.

The Bears got a variety of big plays vs. the Lions. Among them were Dennis Gentry's kickoff return for a touchdown, Walter Payton's long option pass to Willie Gault, Mike Richardson's long interception return and William Perry's classic fumble recovery and return. Winning clubs make these kinds of plays.

I know Mike Ditka wants everything to be perfect as the playoffs approach but sometimes things don't quite work out as planned. Maybe he got a little carried away in his post-game commentary at Detroit, but I'm sure he wanted to get a message across to his players loud and clear. So much of this game is mental and he wants the team to start giving the playoffs serious thought.

I TRULY BELIEVE the Bears are in good shape for the post-season. It was important for them to get back on the winning track after losing at Miami and they did so by claiming victories in the final three

games. I really thought it was a good idea that Ditka used most of his regulars throughout the Detroit game. He even put the starters back in late in the contest on the last touchdown drive. I think it will be quite beneficial that Jim McMahon finally got to throw a TD pass after having two balls picked off earlier in the contest. I don't buy the theory that you rest your regulars because the game isn't that important. These guys don't play next weekend. That will be plenty of rest.

One of the most important aspects concerning the Bears as the playoffs approach is the health of the club. It appears with two weeks off, all of the players on the active roster will be at 100 percent for the opening game which will take place on either Jan. 4 or Jan. 5. It may have been a little scary when Mike Singletary went down with a knee injury in the third quarter at Detroit, but Singletary says it was nothing serious and he could have gone back in if Buddy Ryan and Fred Caito had let him.

Because the Bears have the best record in the conference, they will face the winner of the NFC Wild Card Game in the post-season opener. My guess right now is the Giants will be the foe. I think New York is playing quite well and Frisco is living on borrowed time. Home field advantage is so important in playoffs. That's why the Bears are still the heavy favorite to go to the Super Bowl.

BUFFONE'S PLAYOFF PICKS

NFC: GIANTS by SEVEN over 49ERS
San Francisco is too inconsistent.

AFC: PATRIOTS by TWO over JETS
Eason will have a big day.



WILLIAM PERRY (left) and **Otis Wilson** (55) gang up on Detroit quarterback **Eric Hipple**. (Bear Report photo by Jonathan Daniel)

'We Would Have Been Eliminated (from the playoffs) Today'

Ditka Blasts Bears After Regular Season Finale

By Mark Friedlander
Editor

PONTIAC, MI — The Bears may have tied an NFL record last Sunday for the most victories (15) in a single season, but head coach Mike Ditka sure didn't feel like celebrating.

"We could not have beaten a playoff team today. We would have been eliminated today," Ditka said after the Bears recorded a 37-17 victory before 74,042 noisy fans at the Pontiac Silverdome.

"**WE'LL BE THE** underdogs going in (to the playoffs)," Ditka added. "Whoever comes in will be favored."

"We didn't play well. Where did we play well? It took us until the fourth quarter to outscore our defense and special teams. There was lousy execution out there."

"We talk about kickoff coverage again and we did not cover kickoffs. We talked about shutting down something and we did not shut down their passing game. We talked about getting the ball in the end zone and we end up with field goals."

"**MAYBE WE'RE DOING** too many 'Super Bowl Shuffles.' Maybe that's more important right now. Maybe I'm a perfectionist. Maybe some coaches would be satisfied with this kind of win, but I'm not. Yeh, I'm aggravated. If they (the players) are satisfied, then they're in for a big surprise. I'm concerned because we didn't play well."

When Ditka was asked if some of the players may have been a bit lackadaisical because this game wasn't vital for the Bears, he responded, "Every game means something if you're a pro. If not, you better take the uniform off and do something else."

The players had mixed reactions to Ditka's feelings.

"**HE'S GOT HIS** opinions and we got ours," said LB Otis Wilson. "That's all I got to say about it. The Lions came out there to play but the bottom line is we are 15-1. That's all that counts. We got a W and they got a L. They go home and we go on. It's a new season now and we got three games to go."

"I can't believe this locker room," said safety Gary Fencik. "You'd think we were 1-15 instead of 15-1. I know everybody's frustrated and concerned we go into the playoffs hot, but we won by 20 points."

"We didn't execute real well and we're lucky to get out of here with a win," said QB Jim McMahon. "We're happy we won the ballgame but are not happy with the way we played."

ONE OF THE PLAYERS Ditka criticized in his post-game tirade was WR Willie Gault. He said Gault ran a bad pattern on one of McMahon's two interceptions.



DETROIT QUARTERBACK ERIC Hipple (left) is about to be sacked by linebacker Otis Wilson. (Bear Report photo by Jonathan Daniel)

"I caught everything that came my way (2 for 69). I make one mistake and I get crucified," said Gault. "I'm supposed to be perfect. I'm not supposed to be human. I'm gonna make mistakes. But just so I come back and correct those and help this team win, that's all that matters."

The Bears uncharacteristically turned the ball over four times (three interceptions and one fumble) and allowed

the Lions to pass for 253 net yards. That cost the Bears the so-called "Triple Crown": leading the league in total defense, defense vs. the rush and defense vs. the pass.

"**IT'S DISAPPOINTING TO** give up all that passing yardage. We wanted the triple crown but the most important thing is getting the victory," said Richardson.

"We're still number one in a lot of other defensive categories," said Wilson.

While Ditka pointed out all of the bad things the Bears did, they still managed to do quite a few things right in this contest. On their first drive of the game, McMahon guided the team 56 yards in eight plays before Kevin Butler kicked a 25-yard field goal to make it 3-0. The drive included 30 and 12-yard passes to RB Walter Payton and a 13-yard strike to TE Emery Moorehead.

BEFORE THE OPENING quarter ended, Detroit tied the game at three on a 42-yard field goal by Eddie Murray. That kick was set up on a Walter Payton fumble which was recovered by Demetrious Johnson at the Bear 33.

Late in the second quarter, the Bears regained the lead at 6-3 on a 24-yard field goal by Butler. That drive included a 17-yard pass reception and a 13-yard run by full back Matt Suhey.

The Bears got inside the 10-yard line on both of their first half scoring drives but had to settle for field goals each time.

"**THAT'S THE STORY** of the Bears. It's been happening all year long," said McMahon. "There is no execution when we get down there. There's no question about it. We've got to score more points."

"It's lousy play selection when we get inside the 20. What do you want me to say?" snapped Ditka.

Continued Page 14



HEAD COACH MIKE Ditka gives instructions to quarterback Jim McMahon. (Bear Report photo by Jonathan Daniel)

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Bears-Lions Official Stats

SCORING SUMMARY

Chicago Bears	3	3	10	21	—	37
Detroit Lions	3	0	7	7	—	17

1 - Bears: FG Butler 25 (8-56)
 1 - Lions: FG Murray 42 (4-9)
 2 - Bears: FG Butler 24 (11-57)
 3 - Bears: Gentry 94 kickoff return (Butler kick)
 3 - Bears: FG Butler 21 (13-80)
 3 - Lions: Lewis 2 pass from Hipple (Murray kick) (10-70)
 4 - Bears: McMahon 14 run (Butler kick) (7-83)
 4 - Bears: Rivera 5 fumble recovery return (Butler kick)
 4 - Lions: J. Jones 2 run (Murray kick) (6-59)
 4 - Bears: Margerum 11 pass from McMahon (Butler kick) (3-15)
 Attendance: 74,042 (tickets distributed 80,638, unused 6,596); Time 3:20

FINAL TEAM STATISTICS

	Bears	Lions
TOTAL FIRST DOWNS	20	22
By Rushing	11	6
By Passing	9	15
By Penalty	0	1
THIRD DOWN EFFICIENCY	4-11	5-15
FOURTH DOWN EFFICIENCY	0-0	1-3
TOTAL NET YARDS	382	326
Total Off. Plays		
(Inc. times passing)	63	74
Av. Gain per Off. Play	6.1	4.4
NET YARDS RUSHING	161	73
Total Rushing Plays	33	21
Av. Gain Per Rush. Play	5.0	3.5
NET YARDS PASSING	221	253
Times Thrown —		
Yds. Lost Att. To Pass	4-23	6-45
Gross Yds. Passing	244	298
PASS ATT. — COMP. —		
HAD INTERCEPTED	26-14-3	47-24-3
Av. Gain Per Pass Play		
(Inc. times thrown passing)	7.3	4.8
PUNTS — NO. AND AV.	1-40	3-41
Had Blocked	0	0
TOTAL RET. YARDAGE	282*	202
No. and Yds. Punt Ret.	1-23	1-1
No. and Yds. KO Returns	4-146	6-174
No. and Yds. Interc. Ret.	3-49	3-27
PENALTIES — NO. AND YDS.	8-58	2-15
FUMBLES — NO. AND LOST	2-1	4-4
TOUCHDOWNS	4	2
Rushing	1	1
Passing	1	1
Returns	2	0
EXTRA POINTS MADE — ATT.	4-4	2-2
FG MADE — ATT.	3-5	1-2
TIME OF POSSESSION	33:00	27:00

*Includes 64 yards of fumble return yardage.

FINAL INDIVIDUAL STATISTICS

Chicago					
RUSHING	Att.	Yds.	Avg.	Long	TD
Payton	17	81	4.8	15	0
Suhey	8	46	5.8	13	0
McMahon	3	15	5.0	14	1
Gentry	3	15	5.0	6	0
Fuller	1	4	4.0	4	0
Thomas	1	0	0.0	0	0

PASSING	Att.	Comp.	Yds.	Tkd.	Yds.	TD	LG	Had
McMahon	22	13	194	3-18	1	37	2	
Tomczak	2	0	0	0-0	0	0	0	
Fuller	1	0	0	1-5	0	0	1	
Payton	1	1	50	0-0	0	50	0	

PASS RECEIVING	No.	Yds.	LG	TD
Payton	4	55	30	0
Suhey	3	21	17	0
Wrightman	1	18	18	0
Moorehead	2	33	20	0
Gault	2	69	50	0
McKinnon	1	37	37	0
Margerum	1	11	11	1

INTERCEPTIONS	No.	Yds.	LG
Richardson	1	45	45
Rivera	1	4	4
Duerson	1	0	0

PUNTING	No.	Yds.	Avg.	LG
Buford	1	40.0	40.0	40

PUNT RETURNS	No.	FC	Yds.	LG
Ortego	1	1	23	23
Taylor	0	1	0	0

KICKOFF RETURNS	No.	Yds.	LG	TD
Gault	3	52	27	0
Gentry	1	94	94	1

FUMBLES	Fum.	Own	Opp.	Yds.	TD
Payton	1	0	0	0	0
Singletary	0	0	1	0	0
Dent	0	0	1	0	0
McMahon	1	0	0	0	0
Hilgenberg	0	1	0	0	0
Rivera	0	0	1	5	1
Perry	0	0	1	59	0

DETROIT					
RUSHING	Att.	Yds.	Avg.	Long	TD
J. Jones	16	74	4.6	29	1
Moore	5	-1	-2	1	0

PASSING	Att.	Comp.	Yds.	Tkd.	Yds.	TD	LG	Had
Hipple	44	22	287	6-45	1	37	3	
Ferguson	3	2	11	0-0	0	8	0	

PASS RECEIVING	No.	Yds.	LG	TD
Thompson	9	101	23	0
Mandley	5	127	37	0
Bland	5	48	21	0
Lewis	3	14	8	1
Moore	1	7	7	0
J. Jones	1	1	1	0

INTERCEPTIONS	No.	Yds.	LG
Watkins	1	0	0
McNorton	1	10	10
Bunz	1	17	17

PUNTING	No.	Yds.	Avg.	In 20	LG
Black	3	123	41.0	1	50

PUNT RETURNS	No.	FC	Yds.	LG
Mandley	1	0	1	1

KICKOFF RETURNS	No.	Yds.	LG
Hall	5	147	43
A.J. Jones	1	27	27

FUMBLES	Fum.	Own	Opp.	Yds.	TD
Johnson	0	0	1		
Moore	2	0	0		
J. Jones	1	0	0		
Hipple	1	0	0		



QUARTERBACK JIM McMAHON completed 13 of 22 passes for 194 yards and a touchdown vs. the Lions. (Bear Report photo by Jonathan Daniel)

DEFENSIVE STATISTICS

(Unofficial)

Bears							
	T	A	SK	YL	Int.	PD	FR
Frazier	3	0	0	0	0	3	0
Duerson	3	0	0	0	1	1	0
Gayle	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Richardson	8	0	0	0	1	1	0
Fencik	5	2	0	0	0	2	0
Phillips	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Singletary	4	0	0	0	0	0	1
Morrissey	4	0	0	0	0	0	0
Thrift	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
Wilson	3	2	1	7	0	1	0
Marshall	2	1	1	4	0	0	0
Rivera	4	0	0	0	0	0	1
Waechter	1	0	0	0	0	1	0
Perry	1	2	1	7	0	0	1
Dent	2	1	2	21	0	0	1
Keys	1	1	1	6	0	0	0
Hampton	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Thomas	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Gentry	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Hilgenberg	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Andrews	1	0	0	0	0	0	0

Forced Fumbles: Waechter 1, Perry 1, Dent 2.

Lions							
	T	A	SK	YL	Int.	PD	FR
Johnson	9	2	0	0	0	0	1
Watkins	1	0	0	0	1	2	0
McNorton	1	0	0	0	1	0	0
Graham	3	4	0	0	0	0	0
Hall	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Bostic	2	0	0	0	0	0	0
Curley	2	1	0	0	0	0	0
Fantetti	5	3	0	0	0	0	0
J. Williams	4	1	1	5	0	0	0
Green	3	0	.5	6	0	0	0
Baack	3	1	0	0	0	0	0
Ferguson	1	0	1.5	13	0	0	
Gay	4	2	1	5	0	0	0
King	6	1	0	0	0	0	0
James	1	1	0	1	0	0	0
Bunz	0	1	0	0	1	0	0
Galloway	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Brown	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
A.J. Jones	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
McCall	1	0	0	0	0	0	0

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Ditka Is a Great Judge Of Talent

The Bears' remarkable season has proven a lot of things, such as the rewards of patience. If anyone remembers 1969 and 1-13, they now know it took only 16 years to turn it around to 13-1.

Another thing it proved was Mike Ditka's eye for talent. Again. The coach is not a scout by trade and is reputed to be impulsive on occasion, but his ability to assess talent cannot be overlooked. Ditka knows a football player when he sees one and he knows when he doesn't see a football player. He also insists on putting his best football players on the field.

IF A COACH HAD no other attribute, this one might be enough to keep his job.

Putting the right people on the field is one of the most important things George Halas did. In a lifetime devoted

kins, Halas made the ultimate exception. He let him play when he didn't practice. He knew he had a better chance of winning with Atkins on the field than on the bench.

PAUL BROWN COULD not accept Atkins' iconoclastic approach to football and traded him away. For a long time, Atkins was kept out of the Hall of Fame because the voters thought he lacked the image of the hard-working, God-fearing, All-American football player that deserved to be in the Hall of Fame. But when *Tribune* sportswriter Cooper Rollow, a member of the Hall of Fame voting committee, went to bat for Atkins, he asked Halas to help. Halas told him Atkins was the best defensive end of all time. No more recommendation was needed.

Ditka's personnel decisions since he arrived in 1982 have been marked by a similar commitment to judgment solely by performance on the field. Every new coach wants his own players and eventually gets them. But Ditka likes them not because they're his players, but because they're good players.

John Roveto was his placekicker, but only until he could no longer placekick. Ditka had no qualms about admitting a mistake and bringing back Bob Thomas. Then, even after Thomas' best year, the Bears decided Kevin Butler was too good a fourth-round draft choice to pass up. When it came time for a decision, Ditka went with Butler. The decision was not solely Ditka's, but the responsibility was. Ditka never wavered and Butler proves him right nearly every time he steps onto the field.

Dave Finzer was Ditka's punter until he had trouble punting. The Bears never would have pursued Maury Buford had Finzer enjoyed a better training camp. To Ditka, upgrading the roster is a constant responsibility.

AFTER NEARLY A whole season with few roster moves, Ditka said he probably would have to make a change to bolster the special teams for the playoffs.

When the subject of free agents Todd Bell and Al Harris was coming up every week, Ditka was constantly warning against upsetting the chemistry on his roster. But that was when kickoffs were being covered with more consistency.

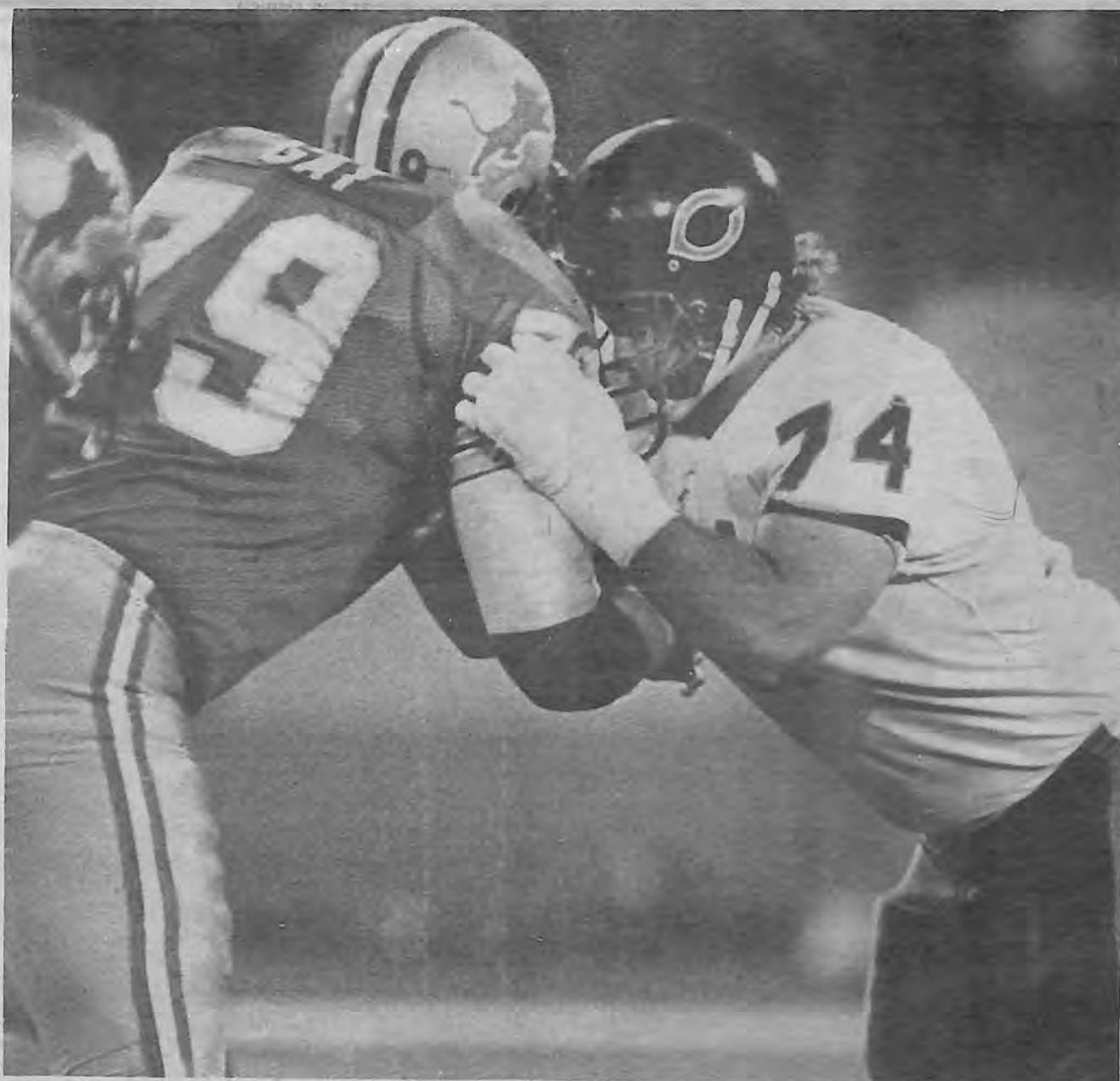
It was Ditka who first championed Wilber Marshall as
Continued Page 6



By
Don
Pierson

to football, Halas made countless contributions and deserved credit for many innovations. Yet nearly everybody can agree that the one thing he did best in order to become history's winningest coach was to put the best players on the field.

He didn't care whether they went to church or not, recalled safety Richie Petitbon. In the case of Doug At-



OFFENSIVE TACKLE JIM Covert (74), a Pro Bowl starter, was selected on the first round of the 1983 draft. (Bear Report photo by Jonathan Daniel)

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Judging Talent

Continued From Page 5

a better linebacker than Harris. Even before Marshall played, Ditka saw a faster, more natural linebacker in Marshall than he saw in Harris. He said Harris' future would be back at end.

IT WAS DITKA who first said the Bears would set more interceptions with Dave Duerson playing strong safety than with Bell.

"Duerson has the best ball awareness of anyone back there," said Ditka.

Statistics proved that the Bears ended up with a better defense in 1985 with Duerson and Marshall than they had in 1984 with Bell and Harris.

IT WAS DITKA who pushed for William Perry in the defensive lineup. Ditka did not see polish, but he saw potential. When Buddy Ryan balked, Ditka put Perry into the offensive lineup to display his athletic ability.

Now, Ditka says Perry is being double-teamed more than anyone else on the defensive line. Ditka might be overstating his point, but the point was nevertheless made. Perry certainly isn't hurting the defense.

"All the publicity and all the acclaim is unusual," said Ditka. "What people don't seem to understand is he can play football."

IF HE COULDN'T, rest assured, Ditka wouldn't allow him on the field just for the sake of playing a national monument.

It is the downfall of many a coach to fall in love with his players. He drafts them, sees them struggle, watches them learn by losing, and endures with them until they win. It is human nature to keep them around, even when the good times are only memories. Ditka does not seem to be vulnerable to such sentiment. Maybe he yells at them in order to keep his emotional distance.

One of Tom Landry's greatest attributes is to maintain a constant rebuilding program. Every Dallas team has 9, 10, 11, 12 rookies on it, regardless of the success of the

previous year's team.

BEARS' PLAYERS RECOGNIZE and appreciate Ditka's decisiveness in this area. Defensive tackle Steve McMichael's career was rescued by Bears' personnel director Bill Tobin and then by Ditka.

Tight end Tim Wrightman was no better than a fourth or fifth-round draft pick in 1982, according to most scouts on most teams. Ditka liked him so much he wanted to take him in the second round. Other Bear officials in the drafting room convinced Ditka to wait another round.

Ditka said he "saw something in Wrightman's eyes" that he liked. It turned out that Ditka might have been looking in a mirror.

"HE REMINDS ME OF ME," said Ditka. "I told the team after he scored that touchdown against the Jets that he put on a burst of slowness to let everybody catch up and then dragged them all into the end zone."

"There have been some pleasant surprises this year, but nobody more than Tim Wrightman," said Ditka.

Pretty soon, Ditka's track record is going to leave no room for surprises.

Five In Starting Lineup Eight Bears Are Selected To Pro Bowl Squad

By BEAR REPORT Staff

Eight Bears have been selected to the National Conference squad for the Pro Bowl which will be played next Feb. 2 at Aloha Stadium in Honolulu, Hawaii.

There haven't been eight Bears on a Pro Bowl team since 1963, the season the Bears last won an NFL championship. Eight Bears were also selected in 1956. This year, the Bears will have more representatives in the Pro Bowl than any other team in the league.

FIVE BEARS WILL be starting in the annual classic against the best players of the American Football Conference. The starters are OT Jim Covert, C Jay Hilgenberg, RB Walter Payton, DE Richard Dent and LB Mike Singletary. The Bear reserves are DE Dan Hampton, LB Otis Wilson and SS Dave Duerson.

"It's a great compliment to the players who made it but

we have some good football players who did not make it. It's hard to comprehend how some of them were left off the squad," said head coach Mike Ditka.

Topping the list of those Bears who Ditka felt should have been selected was rookie placekicker Kevin Butler. After 15 weeks of the regular season, he led the NFC in scoring and had connected on 21 of his last 22 field goal attempts, and 28 of 33 for the season.

ALSO LEFT OFF the list were QB Jim McMahon, the second-rated passer in the NFC, FS Gary Fencik, the Bears' leading tackler, CB Leslie Frazier, ranked second in interceptions in the NFC, OT Keith Van Horne and DT Steve McMichael.

McMahon said he wasn't disappointed that players from the around the league didn't vote for him.

"I could see it coming because I missed a few ball

games. If they don't see you, they won't vote for you," he said. "I don't have the stats the other guys have. Actually, I'd like to have that big (Super Bowl) ring on my finger than go to the Pro Bowl."

DITKA AGREED WITH that line of thought.

"We emphasize that the Pro Bowl is not the main bowl. The other bowl is the main bowl," he said.

Payton has been selected to the Pro Bowl for the eighth time in his 11-year career. He was thrilled that Covert and Hilgenberg will be accompanying him on this trip. They are the first Bear offensive linemen to go to the Pro Bowl since center Mike Pyle was selected in 1963.

"IT'S BEEN A long time coming. Some of our linemen should have gone last year," Payton said.

Singletary will be making his third consecutive Pro Bowl appearance.

"It's always a good feeling to be recognized by the other players around the league. That's what you shoot for," Singletary said.

HAMPTON WILL BE making his fourth Pro Bowl appearance. Hampton was a bit surprised that he was selected since he has only been playing end for seven games. He started the season at tackle but was switched when rookie William Perry was inserted into the starting lineup.

Maybe the biggest surprise amongst the Bears' selections was Duerson. He moved into the starting lineup this year replacing former All-Pro safety Todd Bell, a holdout.

"Because I was on the hot seat, I guess everybody was watching Dave Duerson and wondering what he was going to do," Duerson said. "I guess by performing halfway decent in nationally-televized games, it left a good impression."

Following is the complete Pro Bowl roster:

NATIONAL CONFERENCE Offense

(x — denotes starter)

Wide Receivers: x — Mike Quick (Eagles), x — Art Monk (Redskins), James Lofton (Packers), Tony Hill (Cowboys).

Tackles: x — JIM COVERT (BEARS), x — Jackie Slater (Rams), Joe Jacoby (Redskins).

Guards: x — Kent Hill (Rams), x — Russ Grimm (Redskins), Dennis Harrah (Rams).

Centers: x — JAY HILGENBERG (BEARS), Doug Smith (Rams).

Tight Ends: x — Doug Cosbie (Cowboys), Jimmie Giles (Buccaneers).

Quarterbacks: x — Joe Montana (49ers), Phil Simms (Giants).

Running Backs: x — WALTER PAYTON (BEARS), x — Roger Craig (49ers), Gerald Riggs (Falcons), Joe Morris (Giants).

Defense

Ends: x — RICHARD DENT (BEARS), x — Leonard Marshall (Giants), DAN HAMPTON (BEARS).

Interior Linemen: x — Randy White (Cowboys), Michael Carter (49ers).

Outside Linebackers: x — Lawrence Taylor (Giants), x — Rickey Jackson (Saints), OTIS WILSON (BEARS).

Inside Linebackers: x — MIKE SINGLETARY (BEARS), x — Harry Carson (Giants), E.J. Junior (Cardinals).

Cornerbacks: x — Eric Wright (49ers), x — Everson Walls (Cowboys), LeRoy Irvin (Rams).

Safeties: x — Wes Hopkins (Eagles), x — Carlton Williamson (49ers), DAVE DUERSON (BEARS).

Specialists

Punter: Dale Hatcher (Rams).

Placekicker: Morten Andersen (Saints).

Return Specialist: Ron Brown (Rams).

Special Teamer: Joey Browner (Vikings).

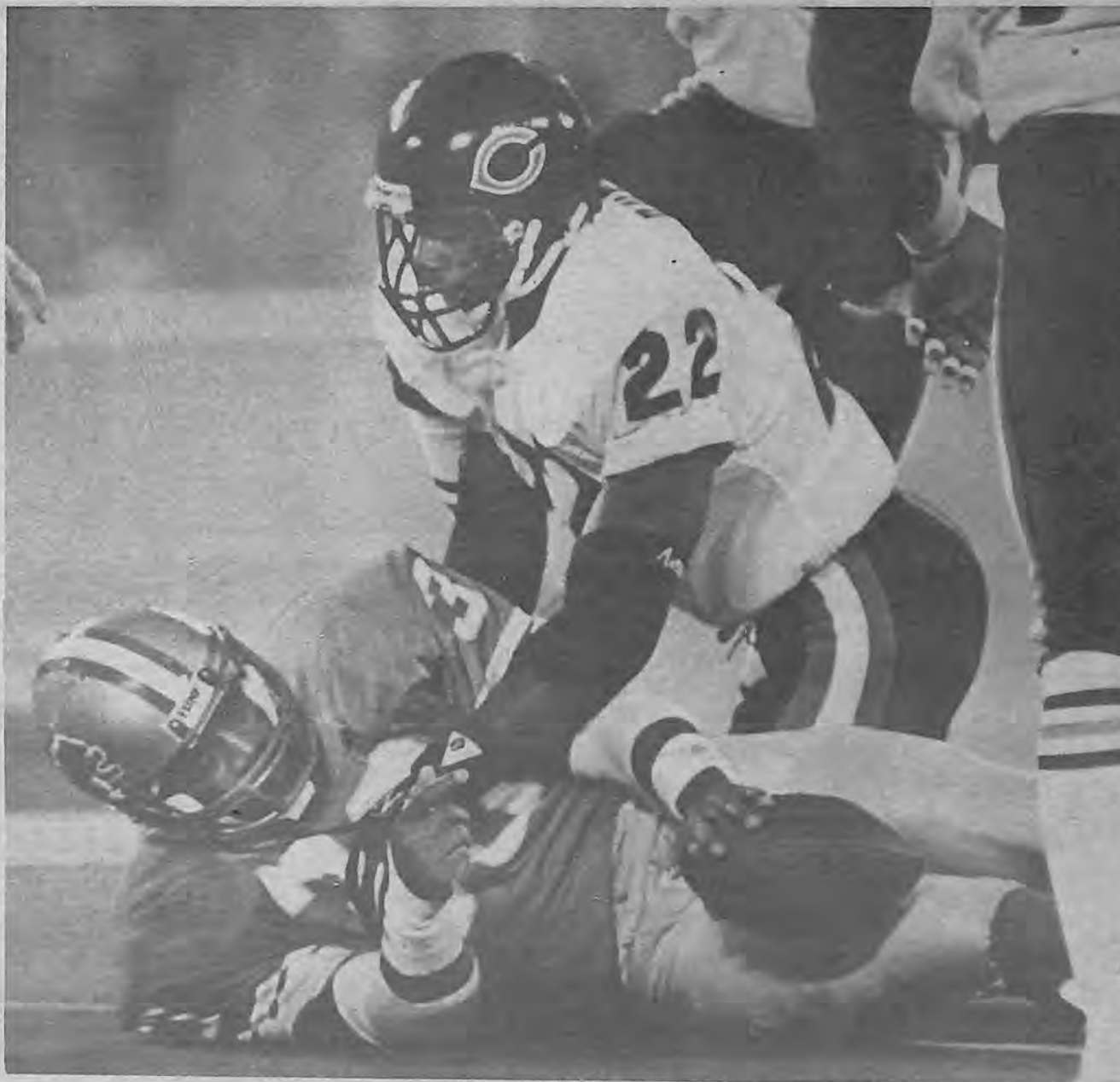
AMERICAN CONFERENCE Offense

Wide Receivers: x — Louis Lipps (Steelers), x — Steve Largent (Seahawks), Mark Clayton (Dolphins), Wes Chandler (Chargers).

Tackles: x — Anthony Munoz (Bengals), x — Brian Holloway (Patriots), Chris Hinton (Colts).

Guards: x — John Hannah (Patriots), x — Mike Munchak (Oilers), Roy

Continued Page 12



STRONG SAFETY DAVE Duerson (22) is one of eight Bears who will play in next February's Pro Bowl. (Bear Report photo by Jonathan Daniel)

It Should Be A Good Weekend For New York

This weekend the Meadowlands will be the scene of both NFL Wild Card playoff games. The Giants host the defending-champion San Francisco 49ers while the Jets take on the New England Patriots.

The odds on the 49ers repeating are long indeed. The only team to win the Super Bowl as a Wild Card entry was the Raiders (in 1980). They beat the Philadelphia Eagles in the title game and played all of their playoff contests on the road.

THE NFC MATCH-UP features the top two offenses in the conference. Both teams have hot running backs and outstanding quarterbacks. No running back has had a better second half of the season than the Giants' Joe Morris, the 5-7, 195-pound scooter from Syracuse. Morris rushed for 202 yards in the regular season finale as the Giants pounded Pittsburgh 28-10 in a playoff tune-up. When Morris is hot, he's explosive. He has six 100-yard games this season and has scored three touchdowns in a single game four times.

Quarterback Phil Simms led the NFC with 3,829 yards passing and tossed 22 touchdown passes. He works his entire compliment of receivers into the attack, using his backs as well as tight end Mark Bavaro.

Defensively, the Giants were second to the Bears in the NFC and were particularly tough against the run. The defense is led by two vicious linebackers, Lawrence Taylor and Harry Carson. They broke Joe Theismann's leg. In the cold climate of New Jersey, the Giants' ability to stop the run is going to be a major plus factor. Any team relying on the pass in winter weather is already in trouble. Remember what happened to Air Coryell at Cincinnati a few years ago in the playoffs? You can expect the 49ers to try short, control passes to set up a running game.

THE GIANTS FINISHED 10-6, their best record since 1963 when they lost to the Bears in the NFL Championship Game at Wrigley Field. No team blew them this year and only a freak play at Dallas prevented the Giants from capturing the NFC East crown.

The 49ers also bring a 10-6 record into the game as they begin defense of their crown. It has been an up and down year for San Francisco, a season marked by so many inconsistencies. They won the one they had to last Sunday, at home over Dallas, to qualify for the post-season. They

were humiliated at Detroit and their loss to the Bears 26-10 at Candlestick Park in October was more one-sided than the score indicated. The 49er offense did not produce a touchdown against the awesome Bear defense.

There were unsubstantiated rumors about Joe Montana and an alleged drug habit. Coach Bill Walsh found it necessary to call a press conference to defend Montana. Joe was clearly rattled by the unfavorable publicity in the Bay Area after becoming the area's "Golden Boy" less than a year ago.

THE 49ERS HAVE relied on the all-purpose play of running back Roger Craig this season. Craig became the first player in NFL history to gain 1,000 yards in both rushing and receiving in a single season. Montana has discovered



By
Dick
Gonski

top draft pick Jerry Rice and lately he's used the rookie in key passing situations. Against the Cowboys, Rice ran a flanker reverse for a touchdown, and ate up the Dallas cornerbacks with his speed.

Defensively, the 49ers are solid although All-Pro Ronnie Lott injured a thumb in the Dallas game and may be subpar this weekend.

Most NFL commentators think the 49ers would love to get another shot at the Bears. That's probably true, but remember the Bears whipped San Francisco soundly a few months ago. If they meet in two weeks, the rematch will be played at Soldier Field.

BUT I DON'T THINK that will happen. The Giants will beat the 49ers on Sunday for several reasons. They are home, the weather will not favor a passer, and the Giant defense led by Taylor and Carson will make life miserable for Montana and Craig. Morris should enjoy a big day as the Giants win and earn the right to lose in Chicago.

In the AFC game, a similar set of circumstances exist. The Jets were the best in the AFC against the rush. On offense, only Marcus Allen piled up more yardage on the ground than Freeman McNeil. Ken O'Brien was shut off by the Bears, but O'Brien has a major asset in playoff competition. He doesn't throw interceptions, and in bad weather, turnovers can kill the best of teams.

New England split with the Jets in the regular season losing at the Meadowlands in overtime. The key for the Patriots could be the play of the special teams. Irving Fryar led the AFC in punt returns and Stephen Starring is a solid kickoff return man. Placekicker Tony Franklin has enjoyed a brilliant year.

THIS WILL BE A hard-hitting game dominated by the two defenses. Andre Tippett is a great one for New England, but overall the Jets have a better team defense. They held the Bears to one touchdown in Chicago's 19-6 win two weeks ago. The Bears beat the Patriots early in the season, 20-7 at Soldier Field.

Playing at home and tough against the run, the Jets should win this one and advance. Turnovers could prove to be decisive in this game as could the weather. The Bears played the Jets in very windy conditions at Giants Stadium and things could be worse this weekend.

No matter what happens, the Bears get the week off. And they'll need it to get over some nagging injuries. Dan Hampton, Steve McMichael and Mike Singletary have two weeks to recover in time for the playoffs. Walter Payton can surely use the time to let his body heal from all the bruises he's accumulated in 1985. Dennis McKinnon has not been 100 percent since mid-season so the rest should help him to.

The second season is about to begin and, yes, the Bears are the team to beat. I like the Giants and Jets this weekend, but look for the Bears to win it all in the Super Bowl, no matter which teams they play.



TIGHT END TIM Wrightman (left) runs into Detroit linebacker Jimmy Williams after catching a pass. (Bear Report photo by Jonathan Daniel)

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Farewell To Honey Bears!!

By Wally Gullick
BEAR REPORT Staff

While Bear mania has reached a feverish peak to where the hysteria has prompted players to record songs, fans to steal commemorative helmets from the Art Institute, and ticket scalpers to put themselves in the high-rent district, the script would not appear to call for the dismissal of the team's cheerleaders as the curtain is going up on the second phase of this fantasy-type season.

It's been a year that long-time suffering Bear fans have dreamed of and newcomers have crowded on to the bandwagon to a point where only standing room accommodations remain available. Earning more than just a blink of the national spotlight, television stations and magazines have engulfed the Bears, with even rival media meccas like New York and Los Angeles finding time to salute the '85 monsters of the midway.

HOWEVER, IT'S BEEN during this same storybook season that the last chapter has been written on the Honey Bears, those 38 gorgeous cheerleaders who for the past nine years have carved their own niche as a part of the expected ritual on a given autumn Sunday afternoon in Soldier Field.

Instituted initially to serve as an extension of the club, whereby they would not only add color and pageantry on game days, but also play roles of public and community relations servants, the Honey Bears have been snuffed out at a time where anybody else who is creating a positive image of the Bears is practically rewarded with the key to the city.

In all fairness to the club, while the irony of the situation headlines the story, the truth in the status of the Honey Bears future was listed as doubtful at the end of the '84 season when the club reviewed all facets of its operations.

"THE DECISION WAS really made last February," said Bears' general manager Jerry Vainisi. He explained at that time management had decided it would not renew the contract of the Honey Bears beyond the agreement which called for the girls to represent the Bears through March of '86.

According to Vainisi, the club also had no intention of announcing the termination of the cheerleaders during the season. However, when the Honey Bears pressed the club for a six-month lead time commitment so they could put things in perspective for '86, the Bears came forth publicly and announced management had decided it would not reward the ladies with a new contract.

"The Honey Bears have done a great job for the club and community, but it was the feeling of the management that we would return to fielding a more traditional type club.

This means going back to a total entertainment package. This may or may not include some cheerleaders, but it's our feeling that professional cheerleaders aren't really the answer for our club," explained Vainisi.

CATHY CORE HAS been the choreographer for the Honey Bears since they first debuted their talents on the Soldier Field sidelines in 1977. The action by the Bears has her mystified.

"I don't know why they made the decision. I don't agree with it. I think it's illogical, but it's their decision to make and they have every right to do whatever they want," said Core, whose disappointment has not drained all of her hope for a possible return.

"I don't think the issue is dead," said Core, whose feeling is shared by members of the squad as well.

"I THINK AFTER THE Super Bowl, people will pick up on it again and I think that public opinion is the only thing that will make a difference for us," added Core in a tone that contains much optimism.

How strong that public opinion really is for the squad is a debatable issue, with the Bears' management sensing an overwhelming wave of apathy from Bear fans in terms of the Honey Bears.

"Our research shows us that 15 percent of our fans love the girls, 15 percent do not like the girls and 70 percent are indifferent towards them," said Vainisi, who is being challenged on those numbers by the Honey Bears.

"I THINK THE NUMBERS are misleading," said Core, who on the basis of the girls' popularity through public appearances reveals positive percentages far greater than 15 percent.

Former Bears' public relations director Ted Haracz, who along with his secretary Corinne Steinmiller, was responsible for putting former club president Jim Finks' idea of the Honey Bears into play, reacted with mixed emotions when he heard the group he had helped to assemble was being made extinct.

"I can understand how certain promotions can outlive their usefulness and realize a business decision has to be made. But on the other hand, the Honey Bear project was one I was proud of and I thought they made a definite contribution," said Haracz, who left the Bears after the '81 season to serve as public relations director for the LPGA.

THE BEARS' DECISION to help brighten then mausoleum-like looking Soldier Field with the Honey Bears quickly became more than just a novelty and Haracz promoted the concept when inquiries from other clubs began to come in.

"We visualized from the start that the Honey Bears



SANDY DEACON

would be in great demand," recalls Steinmiller.

"In fact, 50 percent of my job was being taken over with Honey Bear responsibilities and it was fun to see the other clubs form groups too. It really seemed to bring the NFL closer together," added Steinmiller, who still keeps in touch with some of the former Honey Bears from that first season.

ONE OF THOSE women is Andrea Gutilla, a three-year performer for the Honey Bears, who capitalized on the attention she gained through the Honey Bears to bring in extra clients for the dance studio which she still operates.

"I feel bad for the girls and I think there is a lot more to the Bears' decision than the media is telling us," said Gutilla.

"You don't take an organization that has been around for nine years and just drop them. To me, football is cheerleaders," added Gutilla who also cherished the opportunity she was given to meet celebrities as a Honey Bear.

ACCEPTANCE OF THE Bears' decision would no doubt have come easier from Core, alumni and current Honey Bears if the Bears' management justified their actions with reasoning the girls could relate to. After all, this was an organization that even survived the black eye it suffered when *Playboy* magazine decided it was time to exploit the popularity of pro cheerleaders. Four girls chose to pose for the magazine, all getting the green light from Bears' management, but with it came the stipulation that nude poses would result in termination from the Honey Bears. Three followed the Bears' game plan, one did not and she was dismissed. But the Honey Bears as an organization went on high-kicking their way to another season, never missing a beat.

So with little to cling to, the decision on the part of the Bears has soured the tone of the girls and has forced them to be on the defensive when there has been no evidence of a crime.

"I feel a sense of hurt because I think we've worked very hard for the team and the community and I think the girls for the past nine years have put forth a lot of time and energy. Now with action like this, it almost seems to us that they really haven't appreciated what we have done," said 27-year-old rookie Honey Bear MariAnne Larabee. She was convinced the team would retain the squad due to the support the girls received from the public.

IMPRESSIVE ON THE part of the women is their determined commitment to excellence, despite knowing the fact that their days are numbered.

"Motivation has not been a problem when it comes to practicing for games or shows," says three-year veteran and first-year captain Maureen Malloy. "I just keep thinking this is the last of everything we've done here, so I want to do the most of everything before it's over."

Cheerleading has been a part of Malloy's life, just as it has for many of the girls, and after four years of cheering at high school, four more at Eastern Illinois University and three with the Bears, she's in search of a new hobby. But four-year veteran Trina Green is not going to let the



MAUREEN MALLOY, a three-year veteran, is a line captain for the Honey Bears this season. (Bear Report photo by Jonathan Daniel)

Continued Page 10

Perry Does It Again!!

By Mark Friedlander
Editor

PONTIAC, MI — The legend of Bear rookie William "The Refrigerator" Perry is never-ending.

In the fourth quarter of last Sunday's 37-17 victory over the Lions, Perry scooped up a loose ball following a Detroit fumble and rambled 59 yards before being caught from behind by Detroit tight end David Lewis at the Lion 15. Three plays later, the Bears scored their final touchdown of the game on an 11-yard pass from QB Jim McMahon to WR Ken Margerum.

"I WAS TRYING to get into the end zone. I didn't think he was going to catch me. But here he was right behind me," said Perry. "It was one of those things that happens in the fourth quarter. He just ran me down and tackled me."

"I ran 70 yards (actually 59) and looked up and still had 20 yards to go. Dale Haput (Bears' line coach) makes us practice picking up loose balls all the time. It pays off in a game like this."

When Perry was asked what he weighed after that long run, he responded: "I'm probably around 295 now."

•**WHEN LINEBACKER MIKE** Singletary left the game in the third quarter with a sprained left knee, second-year veteran Ron Rivera took over the middle spot. He made his presence known when he scooped up a fourth-quarter fumble (forced by DE Richard Dent) and carried it five yards for a touchdown which made the score 30-10.

"We were playing man coverage and (Detroit QB) Hipple got the pass to Jones. But Dent made a fantastic hit. I scooped it up and ran it into the end zone," said Rivera.

He was the Bears' second-round draft choice out of California in 1984, but has seen limited playing

time in his two pro seasons.

"A GAME LIKE THIS will get me fired up for the playoffs," said Rivera, who also interrupted a pass vs. the Lions. "Mike is the best linebacker in the league and it's hard for anybody to just step in and take over. If Mike ever gets hurt again, I'll be ready."

Singletary wasn't the only regular missing on defense in the final quarter. DT Steve McMichael started the game but only stayed in for a few plays because of a knee injury he sustained vs. the Jets on December 14. He was replaced by Henry Waechter. Dent left the game in the fourth quarter with a leg injury.

•Placekicker Kevin Butler got a bit of a rookie initiation on the final kickoff of the contest. Detroit head coach Darryl Rogers sent a Lion player after Butler but Butler just ran off the field.

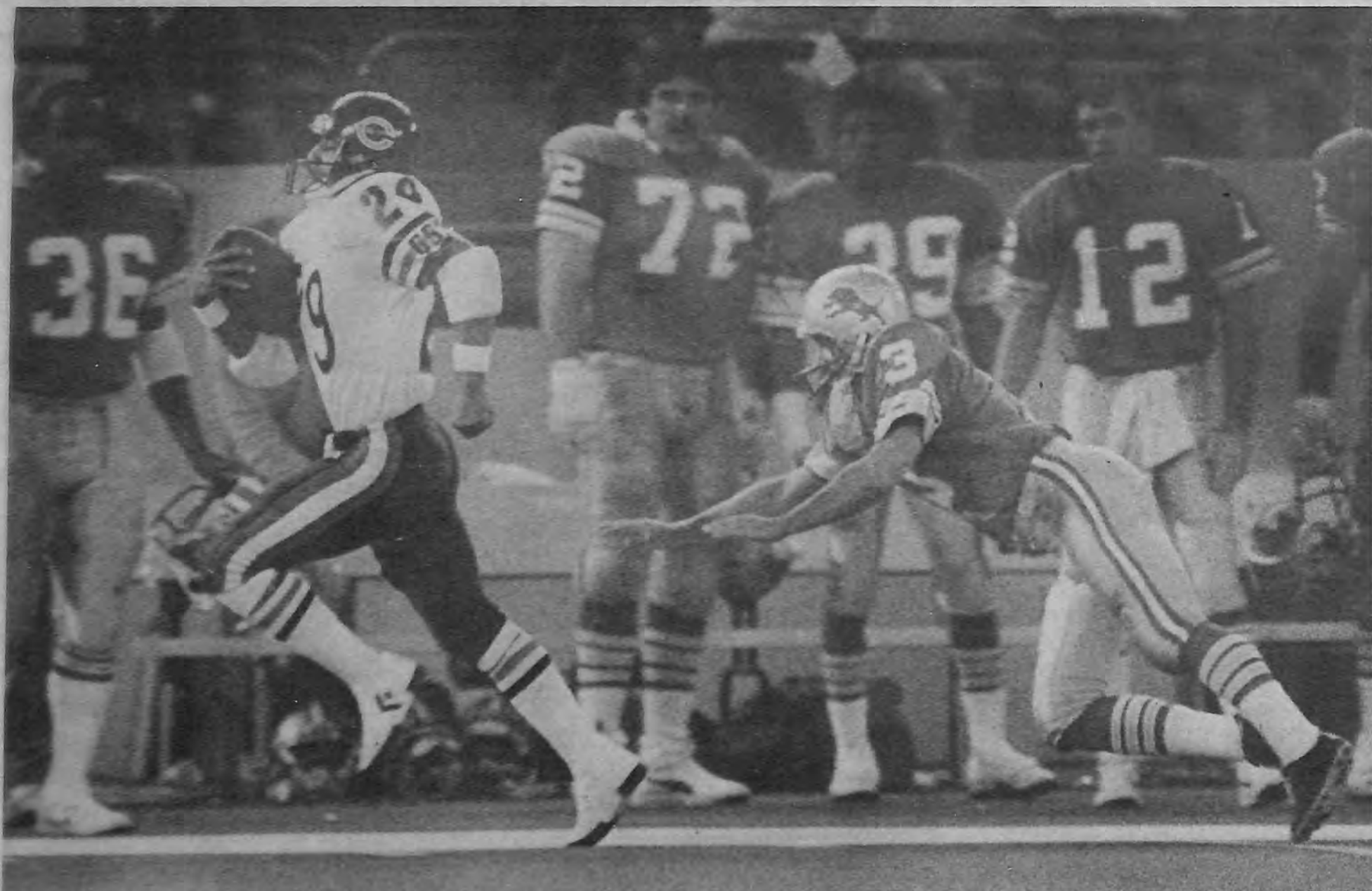
"I THINK THAT'S cheap. That shows what kind of coach he is," said Butler. "He's not much of a coach in my book. I think management should think about a coach who thinks like that. They should try to win the ballgame. Instead, he's trying to hurt people and put them out. Their record shows what they've done this year." In a 1983 game Mike Ditka sent Dave Duerson after Detroit placekicker Eddie Murray.

Butler converted three field goals on Sunday but also missed two, both coming from a long distance (51 and 50 yards).

"I felt I hit the ball well both times," he said. "Those are probably two of the straightest kicks I've hit all year. It helps me to know I can kick it well from that distance. Luckily, those misses didn't hurt us today. The first miss, from 51 yards out in the first quarter, ended Butler's consecutive field goal string at 13."



PLACEKICKER KEVIN BUTLER (left) and Jim Covert celebrate after a field goal. (Bear Report photo by Jonathan Daniel)



DENNIS GENTRY AVOIDS DETROIT placekicker Eddie Murray on his 94-yard kickoff return for a touchdown. (Bear Report photo by Jonathan Daniel)

Honey Bears

(Continued from page 8)

disappearance of the Honey Bears alter her course for stardom.

"I'LL STILL BE A part of A Plus Talent (the agency which represents the Honey Bears). I'm a singer, model, actress and dancer. I know the time lost while not being active with the Honey Bears will spill over into something else," noted Green, whose singing talent is featured on a recently-released 12-inch LP.

If she had to do it over again, Green insists she'd have her sights on being a Honey Bear, as the die-hard Bear fan recalls the great opportunity she was provided with.

An image of the glamorous life was what they portrayed, whether it be smiling on the sidelines or helping raise money at charity functions. But the demands of the public created a never-ending schedule for the ladies that never dented their spirit or integrity.

"A-PLUS HAS DONE a great job of instilling confidence in us and have molded us into one persona that has really worked for us. There's a lot of talent, and the level of dedication and commitment has steadily increased," says Green.

Never instituted with an idea to be able to make the ladies rich, the agency stressed there would be no guarantees, but the opportunity to use the squad as a vehicle would exist.

But for a one-year performer like Larrabee, her chances to further satisfy any entertainment ventures have been diminished, although she was wise enough in the beginning to realize being a member of the Honey Bears was not a ticket to fame and fortune on the silver screen.

"For me, it's been fun, exciting and kind of a fantasy. It served as a real outlet and escape from my daily activities and if the Bears choose to reconsider, I'd return in '87 providing my lifestyle would still lend itself to such a busy lifestyle," said Larrabee, who spends Monday through Friday as a special education instructor for emotionally disturbed junior high students.

It's not surprising either that these girls, who for nine years have given us their good looks, their charm and their winning smiles, would still find a way to remain bright, even though the curtain is coming down on an era they've taken pride in building.

"If it has to end, to have the chance to end it in the Super Bowl would be the perfect ending. We'd be ending at the top. To cheer in the Super Bowl would be the ultimate," concluded Malloy.



KATHY McLEOD

Cumulative Statistics

SIXTEEN GAME TOTALS

Team Statistics	Bears	Opponent
TOTAL FIRST DOWNS	343	236
TOTAL NET YARDS	5837	4135
Avg. Per Game	364.8	258.4
NET YARDS RUSHING	2761	1319
Avg. Per Game	172.6	82.4
NET YARDS PASSING	3076	2816
Avg. Per Game	192.3	176.0
PENALTIES/YARDS	104-912	115-934
FUMBLES/BALL LOST	23-15	30-20
TOUCHDOWNS	51	23

SCORE BY PERIODS

	1	2	3	4	OT	Total
Bears	67	144	123	122	0	446
Opp. Total	50	77	37	37	0	198

PASSING

	Att.	Comp.	Yds.	Pct.	TD	Int.
J. McMahon	313	178	2392	56.9	15	11
S. Fuller	107	53	777	49.5	1	5
W. Payton	5	3	96	60.0	1	0
M. Tomczak	6	2	33	33.3	0	0

RUSHING

	No.	Yds.	Avg.	LG	TD
W. Payton	324	1551	4.8	40	9
M. Suhey	115	471	4.0	17	1
J. McMahon	47	252	5.4	19	3
D. Gentry	30	160	5.3	21	2
C. Thomas	30	125	4.2	17	4
T. Sanders	25	104	4.2	28	1
S. Fuller	24	73	3.1	19	5

RECEIVING

	No.	Yds.	Avg.	LG	TD
W. Payton	49	483	9.9	65	2
E. Moorehead	35	481	13.7	25	1
W. Gault	33	704	21.3	70	1
D. McKinnon	31	555	17.9	48	7
M. Suhey	33	295	8.9	35	1
T. Wrightman	24	407	16.9	49	1
K. Margerum	17	190	11.2	20	2

INTERCEPTIONS

	No.	Yds.	Avg.	LG	TD
L. Frazier	6	119	19.8	33	1
G. Fencik	5	38	7.6	22	0
D. Duerson	5	58	14.5	37	0
W. Marshall	4	23	5.8	14	0
M. Richardson	4	174	43.5	90	1
O. Wilson	3	35	11.7	23	1
K. Taylor	3	28	9.3	18	0

DEFENSIVE STATISTICS

Player	Ttl.	S	A	PD	FR	SK	Yds.
G. Fencik	118	98	20	15	1	0	0
M. Singletary	113	89	24	5	2	3.0	24.0
W. Marshall	78	60	18	4	1	6.0	40.0
O. Wilson	69	54	15	5	2	11.5	79.5
D. Duerson	64	55	9	10	1	2.0	24.0
L. Frazier	52	45	7	22	0	0	0
S. McMichael	44	39	5	2	1	8.0	55.5
R. Dent	38	33	5	7	2	17.0	133.5
M. Richardson	41	37	4	25	1	0	0
D. Hampton	32	26	6	4	3	5.5	43.0
W. Perry	31	26	5	0	1	15.0	42.0
M. Hartenstine	19	15	4	1	1	1.0	9.0
S. Gayle	18	16	2	0	1	0	0
R. Rivera	14	12	2	1	1	.5	4.0

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McCaskey Does Things His Own Way

Under Mike McCaskey's presidency, the Bears took a 29-8 record into their season finale. They have won two division championships.

Largely, that's a coincidence. The team is Mike Ditka's, created by its coach in his own likeness. McCaskey even unwittingly compromised Ditka's authority last year when he clung to his decision to delay extending the coach's contract. But McCaskey has been more than a nattily dressed cheerleader for the Bears' change in direction.

HE APPRECIATES THEIR roots as much as Ditka, probably more. As George Halas' oldest grandchild, he grew up with them. When he proudly directs the Bears onward and backward, he is not charting a stodgy course to the past. Two of the legacies from Halas' heyday are winning and innovating.

Another one is the survival of the NFL. And it is there that McCaskey's impact in two years has been biggest. He represents a new wave of ownership philosophy that is unashamedly steeped in tradition.

He couldn't have arrived at a better time. From the White House on down, far-sighted leaders are lifting their eyes to the past. Modern is passe.

IN 1983, THE rest of the country was scrambling back to John Wayne values while the NFL was spending money as if it were printed on yellow, pink and blue bills. The banner of budgetary restraint was lying around, waiting for an enthusiastic MBA populist to pick it up and carry it.

McCaskey did. He became the prime spokesman for fiscal responsibility when it was a hotter football issue than the one-back offense or the bump-and-run defense. Among NFL owners, he is an outsider with an agenda that is very much in. He may not infiltrate their inner circle, but he'll probably move it.

"I think he's going to be a very positive force in the NFL," says Bill Tobin, the Bears' personnel director. "Tex Schramm can't run the league forever. Al Davis won't be around forever. They need young, enthusiastic leadership."

"HE MAY BE STEPPING on some toes of the old, established leadership that always railroaded through the things it wanted. I don't know that, but I hear some things on the road. 'Why is that young guy shaking things up like that?'"

McCaskey quickly became influential in the NFL's new Long-Range Planning Committee. He couldn't believe there were teams that didn't make three-year financial forecasts. Now it's a league rule.

He helped lead the move to trim four bodies of fat from 49-man rosters. He speaks out frequently on the need to base players' pay on performance rather than draft status. He is eagerly exploring the possibility of a safer artificial turf.

"HE'S MADE PEOPLE who've been in football for years step back and look at it a little bit," Tobin says.

McCaskey spent most of his adult life as a college

were drafted high.

It will take time to bring it into whack, and in the interim, Bear players aren't necessarily thrilled with his inconsistencies. Why, they wonder, if veterans deserve the bulk of the pie, has McCaskey put an end to veterans' signing bonuses? That may have been a crucial stumbling block in the negotiations with Todd Bell and Al Harris, for whom signing bonuses could have made up the income they lost by playing out their options last season.

McCASKEY ALSO miscalculated the sincerity of Mike Singletary's unhappiness with his contract. Instead of satisfying him quietly before training camp, the Bears let him hold out. That way, they had to respond to his blackmail, not his good play.

He's learning. He admits that. He has made specific mistakes. But his primary concern has been with the big picture, with his effort "to begin to define and redefine who the Bears are."

That project sounds like the inspiration of a philosophy major, as McCaskey was. But in practice, the players welcomed top management's reinforcement of Ditka's ongoing sermon that the Bears should be champions simply because they're the Bears.

"I THINK THIS organization is finally committed to winning from the top down," Gary Fencik said.

Aside from once and future champions, though, how does McCaskey define the Bears?

1. "As far as the football we play, being a tough, aggressive and smart team," he says. "All three of those qualities have been a part of the proud tradition of the Bears and I think it's the way in which we're going to get to the Super Bowl."

2. **FISCAL RESPONSIBILITY**, or in McCaskey's words, "a prudent and businesslike management of resources."

3. "Concern for the growth and strength of the league as a whole," which always was Halas' priority even as he worked to dominate the league.

4. "A lively sense of the customer."

5. **"BEING OPPORTUNISTIC**, taking calculated risks." While the Bears may not have other teams' financial resources, McCaskey says, "our distinctive edge must be

Continued Next Page

By
Kevin
Lamb



professor and still has a teacher's respect for research. Where others shoot from the hip, McCaskey would rather wait for a meteorologist's wind report. It is what makes him stronger on long-range planning than on occasion's demanding quick decisions.

Collective bargaining preparations, for example, require careful thought. McCaskey has given a lot of it to what he calls, "a better way of dividing up the economic pie."

HE WANTS 30 percent of the Bears' payroll to be contingent on individual and team performance. The league average is closer to 15 percent, so he'll have to button-hole other owners to keep the Bears' unconditional payroll from lagging behind.

He calls the current system "out of whack," allowing rookies to make more money than veterans because they



PRESIDENT MICHAEL McCASKEY watches the first quarter of the Bears-Lions game on the sidelines. (Bear Report photo by Jonathan Daniel)



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McCaskey

Continued From Page 11

capable people working together to find new and better ways to do things."

The last one is the one that shows up best on the field. An example is the last draft, when McCaskey and general manager Jerry Vainisi were on the side of passing up William Perry. McCaskey makes the final decision. But he listened to the case Tobin and Ditka made for Perry, weighed its merits and their conviction, and the Bears drafted Perry in the first round.

"If we're going to be opportunistic and take that calculated risk of choosing William Perry — and we had some disagreements in that draft room — then I become terribly unhappy."

McCaskey welcomes differences. Within the Bears' coaching staff, he says, "There ought to be disagreements. There ought to be strong feelings. Because that shows people really care about having the best team we possibly can."

Pro Bowl

Continued From Page 6

Foster (Dolphins).

Centers: x — Dwight Stephenson (Dolphins), Mike Webster (Steelers).
Tight Ends: x — Ozzie Newsome (Browns), Todd Christensen (Raiders).
Quarterbacks: x — Dan Marino (Dolphins), Dan Fouts (Chargers).
Running Backs: x — Marcus Allen (Raiders), x — Freeman McNeil (Jets), Craig James (Patriots), Kevin Mack (Browns).

Defense

Ends: x — Howie Long (Raiders), x — Mark Gastineau (Jets), Rulon Jones (Broncos).
Interior Linemen: x — Joe Klecko (Jets), x — Bob Golic (Browns).
Outside Linebackers: x — Andre Tippett (Patriots), x — Chip Banks (Browns), Mike Merriweather (Steelers).
Inside Linebackers: x — Karl Mecklenburg (Broncos), x — Steve Nelson (Patriots), Lance Mehl (Jets).
Cornerbacks: x — Mike Haynes (Raiders), x — Louis Wright (Broncos), Ray Clayborn (Patriots).
Safeties: x — Ken Easley (Seahawks), x — Deron Cherry (Chiefs), Dennis Smith (Broncos).

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Return Specialist: Irving Fryar (Patriots).
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Defending McMahon

Dear BEAR REPORT,

I was totally astonished when I read the letter from J. McDowell from Sioux Falls, SD in the Dec. 12th issue of the BEAR REPORT. Is this guy nuts, or what? For your information Mr. McDowell, McMahon was the leading passer in the NFC before he got hurt last year and is currently the leading passer in the NFC. I'll bet that you didn't know that the Bears have won 21 of their last 25 games that McMahon has started. Instead of you questioning McMahon's sanity, Mr. McDowell, I question yours about you saying that we should get rid of McMahon.

Enough said.

One more thing, we are only five games away (as of this writing) from getting Sweetness that Super Bowl ring that he undoubtedly deserves.

DON'T LET UP NOW, BEARS! STAY TOUGH!

Brad Oliver
Evansville, IN

Where Are They Now?

Gentlemen:

I am a subscriber to your BEAR REPORT and would appreciate knowing what happened to the following former players for the Chicago Bears: Mike Phipps, David Williams, Revie Sorey, Rickey Watts, Jeff Fisher.

I would like to know if they are still active or retired. If you know their present status, please let me know.

Yours Truly,
David Mycek
Amsterdam, NY

Editor's Note: Phipps, Williams and Sorey have all been retired from the NFL for quite a long time and all three have entered the business world. The latest we heard about Watts, he was cut by the Cleveland Browns during last summer's training camp. Fisher is still on the Bears' injured-reserve list but has recovered from

ankle surgery.

'Monsters' Here To Stay

Dear Doug,

I must write to say the Monsters of the Midway, alias Chicago Bears, are again here to stay. The undefeated season is no longer a reality with its loss to Miami. But what is wrong with a 15-1 record, plus Super Bowl XX under its belt in January?

Getting back to the Miami game, I feel the Bears won, taking away three third-and-long conversions on Miami's part. And what I feel is a big play, the questionable penalty for roughing on Marshall. I taped the game and replayed it over and could only see a possible little exciting hand swing as he was getting up.

Another key was crowd noise. Maybe they needed to walk off the field, or better yet call for a quick one-second snap.

In conclusion, tell everybody the Bears don't need to win the Super Bowl for Payton, or for Chicago. How about all the fans from all over the world being included. We could be a trio: Payton-Chicago-world.

Joe Sablic
Ft. Wayne, IN

P.S. Super Bowl XX — Chicago 38, Miami 24. What else! Take 24 away from Miami for perfection.

Editor's Note: The National Football League office announced the officials made a mistake in penalizing Wilbert Marshall for unnecessary roughness.

Sure-fire Onside Kick

Dear Editor:

Maybe Kevin Butler will read this and try out this type of onside kick for the Bear coaching staff.

The ball is teed straight up and down. The kicker approaches the ball straight on and makes contact (if right footed) on the far left side of the ball as close to the middle (on an upright basis) as possible. The kicker uses full leg action and kicks hard.

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I cannot recall ever seeing this used by a pro team. I saw it used in high school and on playgrounds. It works, believe me!

R. Fritsch
Columbus, IN

Continued Page 15

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Ortego Brings Cajun Lifestyle To Chicago

Keith Ortego is southern Louisiana born-and-bred and, except for the pro football career he has always wanted, he intends for his life to stay that way.

"I'm a true Cajun," he says. "If there ever was a true Cajun, I am one."

SOUTHERN LOUISIANA'S Cajun country has its roots in Acadia, in French-speaking eastern Canada, with a distant beginning in France itself. Ortego (pronounced ORT-ah-go) hails from the small Louisiana community of Eunice, which he describes as "a French-speaking town of true Cajun culture."

"It's really a nice lifestyle down there. It's slow, slow-paced," he explains. "You take your time. Nobody's rushing to go anywhere. People are really friendly. When you're

By
Michael
Haggerty



walking down the sidewalk people say hello to you.

"The Cajun lifestyle is people helping each other out. Some people up here think I'm exaggerating, but it's exactly like that. If you're stranded by the side of the road, you don't have to wait two hours until somebody'll stop and help you."

ONE OF THE more recent Cajun imports to the North, of course, is the cuisine, whose merits are extolled in our homes via several television programs. "Yeah," says Ortego, "especially on **Justin Wilson's Louisiana Cookin'**. It seems like everybody up here loves that show. I love it too."

"There's a lot of seafood involved with it — shrimp, crab, crawfish. That spice'll hit you," he laughs. "It's just... boom! That's the way Cajun food is."

Ortego has had to get used to the coldness of a Northern winter.

"**AT FIRST** I told myself that I'd never make it in cold weather. I was getting every kind of warm clothing that you can buy. Now I've adjusted."

But when the season is over I will definitely clear out as soon as we can leave. I know I've adjusted to the cold weather, but I'd rather be down in the South, basking in the sun down there."

He also hopes he'll be down South come late January, when the Super Bowl will be taking place in New Orleans, which is just three hours from Eunice. "That would be a dream come true," he enthuses.

Ortego was placed onto the injured reserve list in training camp and wasn't activated until the ninth game of the season.

"**THAT WAS A** real surprise to me," he recalls. "I knew the Bears also had Brian Baschnagel, who's been here for 10 years, available to be chosen."

"I was just a rookie, not even drafted. People say you should never get hurt in training camp, but I did — a knee injury. Luckily, the Bears thought I was doing well enough before I got hurt to give me a chance. They thought I could return punts," continues Ortego, who wears Mike Ditka's old uniform number, 89.

"I don't mind doing that, special teams work — anything to stay around this team, a team that'll possibly go to the Super Bowl in New Orleans. I'd love it. How many players, first year in the league, get a chance to possibly play in the Super Bowl? My head's still spinning from that."

ORTEGO ADMITS THAT he still has being home on his mind. "You think about home every day, about what it'll be like being home again," he muses. "But at the same time you have to remember that playing football is now your job."

"It's not like you're in college any more. This is your job."

When he finally does get home in the off-season, Ortego will begin working out immediately and arrange to finish off the two courses he needs at McNeese State, which is located just 60 miles away in St. Charles.

ORTEGO'S MAJOR IS business management and it's part of an academic track that he set for himself at Eunice High School, where he achieved an average of 3.89 on a 4.00 scale. At McNeese State he earned a perfect 4.00 GPA as a freshman and his current grade point there is 3.30.

Upon graduation at McNeese State he intends to enroll in law school at LSU, which is in Baton Rouge, a mere hour-and-a-half drive from Eunice. He then plans to join



ROOKIE KEITH ORTEGO (left) looks for running room on a punt return in the first quarter of last Sunday's game. (Bear Report photo by Jonathan Daniel)

the law firm in Eunice where he has worked in past summers.

When he talks about southern Louisiana, the words roll lovingly and leisurely off his lips. He projects himself into the future as a lawyer in Eunice, a place which does not worship him as a football star ("They'll keep my head level in Eunice," he grins), despite the fact that Ortego is the first player from the town to perform in the National Football League.

So, he'll be trying cases in court, teaching the local kids pass routes, eating gumbo under a summer sun and riding horses in Mardi Gras parades. A man can get to liking that kind of life.

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Bears Win

Continued From Page 3

The Bears opened the second half with a bang. Dennis Gentry returned the kickoff 94 yards for a touchdown and amazingly stayed in bounds as he straddled the Detroit sideline for most of his journey.

"GENTRY'S KICKOFF RETURN really set the tone for the second half. We could have been in for a long afternoon if he hadn't done that," said McMahon.

Midway through the third quarter, the Bears increased the lead to 16-3 when Butler connected on a 21-yard field goal. Once again, the Bears failed to get the ball into the end zone after moving it inside plus-territory. This drive included a 19-yard pass to Gault and a 20-yard strike to Moorehead.

Before the quarter ended, the Lions closed the gap to 16-10 when QB Eric Hipple connected with TE David Lewis on a two-yard touchdown pass. This drive, which covered 70 yards in 10 plays, included a 29-yard run by FB James Jones which got the ball down to the two.

EARLY IN THE final quarter, the Bears increased their lead to 23-10 when McMahon scrambled 14 yards for a touchdown. That touchdown was set up on a 50-yard option pass from Payton to Gault.

"It was supposed to be a quick pass over the middle to the wing man (WR Dennis McKinnon). The defensive back was climbing all over him. There was plenty of room to run and I took off," said McMahon concerning his TD run.

Just 28 seconds later, the Bears increased the lead to 30-10 when LB Ron Rivera scooped up a loose ball and carried it five yards into the end zone. DE Richard Dent had forced Hipple to fumble on the play.

DETROIT, HOWEVER, wasn't ready to go home just yet. With 11:01 left, the Lions closed the gap to 30-17 when Jones rushed two yards for a touchdown.

The Bears finally iced the cake with two minutes left when McMahon connected with WR Ken Margerum on a 11-yard touchdown pass. McMahon, who had been taken out earlier because the game appeared to be in hand, was put back in for this drive.

"They were only down 13 after they scored. The game wasn't intact yet," said McMahon.

The Bears will have a two-week rest before opening the playoffs on either Jan. 4 or Jan. 5 against the winner of the NFC Wild Card game. That will be either the Giants or the 49ers. Ditka said the two-week break won't help.

"What are we gonna do in two weeks that we didn't do this week?" he said. "We practice every day. You still can't run the plays if you don't execute. Maybe this game is more mental than physical."

GAME NOTES: Only the 1984 San Francisco 49ers (15-1) have won as many games in a single season as the Bears have this year... Placekicker Kevin Butler set a NFL record for a rookie by scoring 144 points. The previous record of 132 was held by Gale Sayers who set it in 1965... RB Walter Pay-



CORNERBACK BRUCE McNORTON takes off after intercepting a Jim McMahon pass. (Bear Report photo by Jonathan Daniel)

ton finished the regular season with 2,034 combined yards (pass receiving and rushing). It is the third consecutive season he has gone over the 2,000-yard combined mark, a league record... The Bears went 8-0 against NFC Central teams this year and have won 17 of their last 18 games against division foes... They have won nine of their last 11 road games and have won 22 of the last 27 on artificial turf... They had the ball for six more minutes than the Lions and have held an advantage in possession time in 39 of their last 40 games... The Bears have outrushed 35 of their last 38 opponents... Since 1984, the Bears are 21-1 when leading at the half and 19-2 when outsacking an opponent. They had six sacks to the Lions four last Sunday... The Bears have won 23 of the last 27 games Jim McMahon has started... Mike Ditka's record as a head coach is now 36-21.

Playoff Issue Next

Next week's issue of the BEAR REPORT will be a special playoff edition. It will include an extensive preview of the Bears' initial post-season contest. The issue will be sent FREE of charge to all current subscribers and will also be available on newsstands throughout the midwest at the usual \$1.25 per copy price.

Next Year's Opponents

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(Dates and times will be announced by the NFL next April)

Practice Site Undecided

The Bears are still undecided about where they will practice prior to their opening round playoff game. They have narrowed down the choices to staying in the Chicago-area, going to Suwanee, GA, the site of the Atlanta Falcons' headquarters, or to Champaign, IL, where they would practice under a newly-installed plastic covering at Memorial Stadium on the University of Illinois campus.

Team Photo Update

All BEAR REPORT subscribers who ordered under the terms of the FREE PHOTO OFFER will receive their Bears' four-color team photos in a few weeks. There has been a slight delay in the processing of the team photos due to the mass amount of subscription orders the BEAR REPORT has received in recent weeks.

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More Letters

Continued From Page 12

Misses Bell & Harris

Dear Editor,

It's a shame. It's a shame that a couple of great athletes like Todd Bell and Al Harris aren't playing this year. If the Bears had Bell, the two best safeties in football would be on the same team (Duerson and Bell). Duerson has done a great job at strong safety but he appears to be best suited to roam free and look for the pass. Bell makes his big play by making big hits.

The Bears don't really have a heavy hitter in the defensive backfield without Bell. Harris is a quality player that can help in more ways than one. He has done a lot for the Bears. He deserves what he is asking for. The worst part about the holdout situation is that they can't play for anyone this year.

The football free agent rule sucks. I love it as a fan because the star athlete is usually going to stay with the team that drafted him, but for a player it sucks. Football players are little more than slaves forced to play at the rate his owner sets for him even if his market value is higher. If you don't take it, you're forced to sit out a year without pay. Where in America are you unable to change companies after your contract runs out?

Bell and Harris are only pursuing the American dream — get as much as you can while you can get it; that's the same principle Mr. McCaskey is working under, but the odds aren't for the player.

Jonathan C. Ray
Ft. Wayne, IN

Play-Calling Hurt

Dear Doug,

I read your article on how the Bears were going to destroy the Dolphins. Well the Dolphins defrosted the Refrigerator. Coach Ditka's play-calling didn't help the Bears. The Miami Dolphins are still the only undefeated team in a single year in the modern era.

John Ahlgrim
Phoenix, AZ

Papa Bear Is Smiling

Dear Doug,

I am a woman, have been a Bear fan since 1936. Don't telephone or come over when the Bears are playing — listened on WGN before TV. There have been good and lean years. I feel

sure Papa Bear Halas is smiling because of what Mike Ditka has done since he is coach, both offensively and defensively. I was so happy when the **BEAR REPORT** told us Papa Bear had hired Mike. Ditka was a heck of a player (with his butch haircut) and he is a heck of a coach. The media disgusts me the way they report the news — we know the truth, they twist everything.

This year the Bears will win the Super Bowl, especially for Papa Bear Halas, Walter Payton, who is a special person and player (for 11 years), Mike Ditka and all the rest of the wonderful players on the Bear team, they are special, and for me.

Good luck you wonderful guys.

Emelyn Mast
Elkhart, IN

P.S. "Refrigerator" Perry, you are something else!

A Miami Vice

Dear Doug,

Despite your prediction that the Bears would devour the Dolphins unless the Bears left about 20 players at home, it appeared that the Miami Vice influenced the whole Bear camp. The Bears' first mistake, presumably, was arriving on Sunday directly from a "Refrigerdaire's" climate into a Dolphins' environment to big game fish without any trial run (workouts). The second mistake was that the "Refrigerator", evident by the commercial side of **Monday Night Football**, was shown having eaten an enormous amount from McDonald's menu. Then, apparently having overly eaten, William Perry was shown having been stored in a refrigerator for awhile.

Then more apparent of the Miami Vice's influence was when the Bears handed over two scoring opportunities: giving the ball away on an onside kick and letting a very vulnerable punt execution be blocked. Offensively, the Bears were executing ineffective passing attacks when they should have been establishing their formidable running game with not only one set of running backs (Matt Suhey and Walter Payton), but also with a second set (Calvin Thomas and Dennis Gentry) interchangeably.

Throughout, the Bear Camp felt the Miami temperature applied by the DON Shula, the Godfather of NFL coaches.

Alvin J. Owens
Washington, DC

'Village Idiot's' Rebuttal

Dear Doug,

I am the village idiot from Noblesville, Indiana writing back to say a few words in reference to Mr. Steve Hoppe's interesting letter which appeared in the December 12th issue of the **BEAR REPORT**!!

It's interesting Steve that you think Mike Ditka doesn't have anything to do with the Bears' recent success, and that it is all Buddy Ryan and his great defense. Well yes Steve, like I stated before Buddy Ryan is a very important part of the Bears' success, but Mike Ditka is the leader, and the catalyst, and the team takes on his aggressive style and nature. He (Ditka) came into a very bad situation and turned it around in three short years by drafting great talent and getting rid of the dead weight.

Mike Ditka and Buddy Ryan are both very important but without the talented players both the men coach, neither man would be very successful at all!!

Steve, so what if George Allen said the Bears' defense was the best in the last 10 years? Any Bear fan would know that fact, and not because they watched ESPN!!! But Steve, if you need ESPN to help you figure out these simple facts, then go ahead.

But one thing is for sure Steve, you and NATE aren't real Bear fans if you think both Ditka and Ryan aren't equally important. And no great team in the NFL goes without a great coaching staff that works hard at their jobs night and day.

The Chicago Bears' success is not just because of Buddy, Mike or any certain players, it's everyone working together. But Steve, you and your buddy NATE can keep up the good work of being on the all-ignorant, and all-negative team, because you're both 1st team in my book!!

And you wanted me, and Bell and Harris to go sit on our brains, well Steve at least we've each got one to sit on.

Walt Morris
Noblesville, IN

Better Be Prepared

Dear Doug,

I am writing to congratulate the Bears on a great season. When the second season — the playoffs — begin, please be prepared because in the second season, one loss and you are history. That is all it takes to keep the Bears out of the Super Bowl.

Ray Anderson
Lexington, Miss.

Home Field A Plus

Dear Doug,

I hope that the Chicago Bear fans learned something from the Miami Dolphin fans. The Dolphin fans were the 12th man on the field for the Monday night game. Having the home field advantage in January is a plus. But if the fans get in the game and STAY IN, they'll be assured of cheering for the Bears in the Super Bowl.

Go Bears.

Mark Kulczyk
Hammond, IN

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